

SHACKLETT

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The Evolution of a Statesman

BY
Walter Barr

CHAPTER XXVI.

THE GODS AND KISMET.

"Say, Shacklett, can't you run over to Springfield and look into that bill for the regulation of railroads with terminal on river boundaries of the State, otherwise the Chicago, Galesburg & Mississippi Railway? It's the most peculiar sandbagging measure I ever held over my head, and I imagine it's worthy of your interest." General Manager Norton was saying during a chat over many affairs of the road in the private office.

"Sorry," replied the general counsel, "but when I stipulated in the beginning that I should attend only to strictly legal business I did it especially to preclude my ever having to work for the road at any capital. I want to be free to introduce sandbagging bills myself," he laughed, "and I'm not going to do anything which will tend in the least to show that I ought to be for the road in the Legislature. If I'm elected justice of the peace some time I shall feel bound by my contract to decide all cases in your favor, but if I go to the Legislature I'm free to vote against you every time if I want to."

Norton laughed, too, and Shacklett continued: "But I see no objection to recommending good men to you for that work if they're my friends. Now, there's young McKee, of my town, who is a statesman out of a job since he lost a committee clerkship, and he can manage your lobby for you this winter as well as anybody, and better than some you've had there lately. I wish you'd give him the place, and I'll guarantee his quality."

Norton looked at his desk to hide the smile in his eyes at the metaphysics involved in Shacklett's chosen position when it was all worked out, and responded that McKee would be sent for that afternoon.

McKee found that the bill to regulate his particular road was peculiar in that it displayed an astonishing amount of detail knowledge of the conduct of railroads, and their desires which are kept the most deeply hidden. The strangest thing was that a member from far down in Egypt, who had been raising horses and wheat for thirty years, should happen to light upon so many particular distasteful features and get them into one bill. Of course, a lawyer had written it, but the member made no secret of the fact that he had caused his son-in-law, a lawyer in a country town, to fix up the language and insert "said" and "provided" in the proper places.

The lobbyist in charge of the interests of the railroad spent a week studying the member who introduced the bill, and then decided to seek elsewhere for an opening in the lines of the enemy. The member certainly was in earnest, and, curiously enough, was honest in his views.

"There's bills enough being introduced here," he said, "and I wouldn't add to the straw comin' out of the thrashin' machine if I don't believe that a bill like mine oughter be passed. You fellows can't understand the farmer any more than I can. I can't understand you, so I don't see much use of my arguings. But I expect to find enough members here who can understand it to get it passed—that is, if you don't buy up too many of 'em. I ain't goin' to preach about your corrupt methods, for all's fair in war, and that's the way you fight. But if I can beat you with my own little game I'm goin' to do it."

Then McKee went to two or three members who had shown themselves earnest supporters of the farmer's bill. He got little satisfaction from them. One of them talked about the oppression by capital and the danger to the country from corporation greed and the other things so ably that McKee was more than a little bit to believe what he was saying, and was using it for a mask. But he found it impossible to pull off the mask. Only one of them was candid with him, and this one said:

"Young man, I know pretty well what your road's worth, and within a few thousand what it has to spend, but I want to tell you that you're raised out of this game and are playing in company too high for your blood. If this bill hit other roads as your blood could pool they would probably break the push behind the bill, but your one road can't do it by itself, and I know it, and you'll find it out by failing to weaken our side."

"But who can have enough affirmative interest in this thing to raise us out of the game, and enough money to do it? It takes me weeks to spend in that way—how can he make anything by it?" McKee asked, boldly, hoping that the candor of the other man would extend to some valuable information.

"I don't know how he's going to make anything by the bill passing," was the reply. "And, to tell the truth, I don't know exactly who he is, but I know he's spending hardly any money. I didn't know he was, did I? There's other valuable considerations around here besides legal tender, ain't there?"

"I see," said McKee, with puckered lips, "his influence. Who has the appointments? The Governor and the senator; but what are they up to? We might satisfy them in some other way if they'll only state what they want."

"No; it's not the Governor nor the senator; I'm pretty sure from what I know. It seems to me, young man, that you'd better post yourself on the situation before you expect to bust the machine you're up against. I wouldn't tell you if I knew who's behind the scene, but I will tell you that I got out of it certain things that will be worth more to me than any money that's paid around here very often."

McKee felt that his future was at stake, for if he executed this job for the railroad Norton would keep him for years in charge of the railroad lobby at Springfield at a good salary and with plenty of chances to pick up something besides. But if he failed somebody else would succeed him, and the session was a week older. He knew that results are the measure of efficiency in the lobby, and that there was no argument in anything else. He saw the bill referred to committee and heard the chairman tell its sponsor that it would be reported back the following week. He saw member after member suddenly take an interest in the bill, but the only thing he got was by noting that those whose terms expired with the session and who would be up again soon for re-election composed the principal part of those sending the bill along toward passage and signature. He soon found out that the Governor would sign the bill if it passed and would not meddle in the matter, or consider it, before the bill had got through the Legislature. In despair he ran down to Warsaw one morning and saw Shacklett.

"I understand you guaranteed my value to the company," he said, "and I came to tell you that you'll have to meet the paper when it's due, from the present outlook. I never saw such a close combination being any bill as there is behind this one, and it's as powerful as it's invisible. It's like a big trolley car pushing along with

the dynamo hid in a swamp, and the swamp not on the map. If you don't get into that side of the road's affairs, can't you help me personally? I hope you catch the distinction." And McKee tried hard to laugh. "I think you can work it out if you go at it right," Shacklett said, with a little display of interest. "It's always the best rule to bunch your shots, in legislatures as well as in fighting in the navy. Now, if it were I, although I'm not posted enough to know much about this case, I'd let the main line of private and noncoms, alone and fire all my ammunition at one shot at the commander-in-chief. That might work, but I can't tell, of course, as you can, when you've been there so long."

"That 'so long' was unkind," wailed McKee, "and how can I do that when I can't find out who the commander-in-chief is? I'd give half what Norton allowed me to find that out."

Shacklett laid down the law book which he had been furtively reading while they were talking, and looked at McKee for almost the first time.

"I'll tell you frankly," he said, "that I don't want to have anything to do with this part of the company's business, and I don't want to talk to you about it, but evidently the chairman of the committee that has the bill knows his business and knows whom he's working for. Now, why don't you go on and talk business from the jump? Find out what will bring him out of the perch, and then shoot it at him. That's what I'd do. But I don't even advise you to do it, nor suggest it to you for action. Let me do something else for you, and don't mix me up in this thing, please."

McKee went out vexed, but the more he thought of the plan Shacklett had laid down the better he liked it, and, at any rate, there was nothing else to do, as far as he could see. So, as soon as he got back he asked the committee chairman up to his room at the hotel, having casually met him in the corridor.

"I've been thinking that you folks weren't taking much interest in this bill," the chairman replied to McKee's opening, "and there's not the least doubt that it will make farmer votes for me and the rest of them by the wagonload. What benefit do you think the State will derive from its defeat that is greater than a wagonload of ballots?"

"A hundred thousand dollars more," said McKee, quietly and firmly.

"Then hunt up somebody to pay the money to, and the bill will be passed. Gravities is better than theirs full of cheap printing. That lets me out, of course. I don't mind telling you, so that you'll understand it, that a hundred million dollars is no temptation to me, and I think you ought to know it yourself if you're capable of earning your salary in the third house."

"Senator," McKee said, groping in darkness for the least doubt that he could make the farmer votes for me and the rest of them by the wagonload. What benefit do you think the State will derive from its defeat that is greater than a wagonload of ballots?"

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self. It's right here in your own handwriting—the first draft. What the—

"See here, McKee," and Shacklett's voice was as quiet as a frozen pond and as hard and cold as ice. "McNoggon got what I wanted him to have, and you got a position at three thousand per. No man ever threw me down and kept out of the poorhouse. Understand me?"

McKee threw the draft of the bill into the grate and held out the manuscript of the oration for next day with a steady look into Shacklett's eyes. Shacklett caught the train, and the audience which heard his Fourth of July oration upon "The Political Methods of the Founders of the Republic" found it very enjoyable, partly because it was so different from the routine grist of Independence day addresses and was full of information of a kind seldom given in popular histories.

CHAPTER XXVII.

THE INTANGIBLE FORCE.

In his travels to the courts and to make speeches at Fourth of July celebrations and at picnics given by various organizations Shacklett found himself in the midst of a great force, intangible chiefly because it was not seen. He kept out of politics entirely at this time, but could not keep out of contact with the people in the aggregate any more than he could stay away from a public sale in the old days, or his mother keep away from a quilting bee down in the home of his boyhood before he was born. He heartily enjoyed attending and speaking at these public meetings, and his hold on the audiences seemed greater than ever before now that he did not care for their franchises, the concrete representation of their good will and admiration. He found it a new pleasure, and a great one, to mix with people with no ulterior object for his natural sociability, and he found that he liked best to talk to well-informed, sensible laboring men in and out of union.

The intangible force permeating all around him was easily felt by Shacklett and easily understood by him, although he had only the casual interest in it that one takes in a real gain if one has been in the museum business. The component parts of the intangible force took the same interest in Shacklett that Wall street takes in a great financier who has retired from the Stock Exchange, or that an old and hard-working criminal takes in a reformed burglar who is living up to his new position as superintendent of a Sunday school—the intangible force itself will prefer one simple, and another more tangible force exerted in another direction will prefer the other figure. For the intangible force was not exerting its influence upon the mobile body politic unopposed, though it was never neutralized and little diverted from its original direction of action.

The moment the intangible force was named it became somewhat tangible, but it really was not named because of a dispute about terminology—it wanted itself called the organization, and the opposing force wanted it called the machine. Since it was better so, for practical purposes, there was little known to the masses of voters, whose hands it guided as ballots were marked in the election booths. The force became tangible some years later, and at once the organization divided, or the machine burst to pieces, whichever form of expression is preferred. To Shacklett it was as beautiful a mechanism as his watch, and he understood it much better than he did the works in the gold case because he was not a watchmaker, but was a politician by birthright and education. He called the intangible force the organization to other lawyers, as being the more polite term, and he called it the machine to himself and wife, as being the most appropriate name for it and a more direct expression.

The intangible force, which always had been resistless, had the velocity and something of the diffusion of electricity. At a greater rate of speed than an order from the brain moved the foot an order from its source moved whole county conventions, two hundred miles away from Springfield. Since Shacklett finally was mixed up in the whirlwind wheels and came and eccentricities of this organization, it may be called in these historical pages the machine, as a convenient term used without intention of being rude.

The machine was delightfully simple when one understood it. There were two men, Black and Ramsey, in the center of a web of influence, the center of the machine. These men had a more or less intimate acquaintance with people in each county, and had a colonel in each congressional district. In each county was a tried and trusted captain who had demonstrated his ability to get results, and in each township was a lieutenant who was able to instruct the voters of the party in the correct principles of the election of the fit. When the properly instructed voters had selected delegates at the primaries, and these carefully selected delegates had met in county convention, it followed logically that the delegates to the state convention and the congressional and legislative district conventions would be excellent judges of the voters of the party in the fit. When any rate, they could not go wrong. At the convention the voters had been told by men close to the source of all wisdom in Springfield which candidates for nomination were the best men. Since nomination was equivalent to election there were opportunities for the return flow of the intangible force moving the convention delegates into office and surrounding the colonels and captains with sincere honors, thus preserving a proper conservation of energy and a correlation of force that was perfectly natural.

Sometimes a little heat would be caused by the operation of the opposing force, which was called a body of reformers or a lot of soreheads, according to one's own point of view. Since he has no attorney now it will be necessary for you to read and appear and of its own motion allow the granting of a new trial, and then consent to the entering of judgment for \$5,000. He won't need to employ another lawyer then."

"We'll do it," snapped out McKee, like the breathing of a last violin strain. "But who the devil is Lawrence P. McNoggon?"

"He's the plaintiff in a suit against your road for damages resulting from the killing of his cow and the breaking of his leg, which suit is now appealed from the refusal of the trial court to give him a new hearing. His lawyer is out of the case, having given it up in disgust and because he was defending himself from various criminal charges. Since he has no attorney now it will be necessary for you to read and appear and of its own motion allow the granting of a new trial, and then consent to the entering of judgment for \$5,000. He won't need to employ another lawyer then."

Even if McKee had failed to find the mechanism concealed in the box it was pretty evident that the pendulum started by Larry's cow was still swinging. What it accomplished after that belongs to the chronicles of an ordinary life with another cow and the children, and not to the present biography.

On the evening before the next Fourth of July McKee was trying to comply with Shacklett's request to find his celebration speech in the middle drawer of his desk, while Shacklett himself packed his valise in time to catch the train. When the general counsel of the railroad came in hurriedly to pick up the manuscript and drive rapidly to the station he found McKee standing beneath the electric lamp with several sheets of cap paper in his hand.

McKee looked up at Shacklett with distressed eyes and open mouth, looked back at the paper, and then at Shacklett again. The paper was covered with writing much interlined and crossed out, with notations scattered through it, and additions to sentences running up and down the sides. Shacklett hardly noticed McKee and said quickly:

"Got my speech? Let's have it. Much obliged, but I'd have missed that train if I'd tried to find it myself."

McKee at last found his voice, though it sounded little like his own as he blurted out:

"And you wrote that damned bill your-

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future, generally chose to ally themselves with success, and there could be no doubt on which side success steadily sat.

Once or twice the opposition received the accession of a whole regiment of deserters from the enemy. In one case it was the man whom the intangible force had elevated to the gubernatorial chair and had placed at the very door of the chamber from which the power issued—a man whom the automatic working of the machine would have lifted up into the seat of supreme power itself, in preparation for the days when the always-present contingency of death—recognized only by lawyers and politicians—should leave a vacuum in the general, and it suggested the idea that the younger men could afford to keep out of his way, let him have his inning, and then take theirs. He was so dignified that his remarks, although they would have been bombastic many times if spoken by a pompous man, sounded well from under his heavy iron-gray mustache, which adorned a face round, wrinkled with good humor, and soured by disappointment at the same time. His countenance was beaming when he smiled, and almost haggard when at rest—one of those faces that brave men whipped by fate wear. His hair was still thick, although gray, and added to his dignity, and his fine physique made him a man of distinguished appearance in any assembly.

He had entered the civil war as a lieutenant, and in 1865 was a colonel. He had been brevetted brigadier upon his discharge, and was the specially honored guest at every old-soldier reunion in his part of the State. But he had been a wall flower at every political ball since the war ceased to be much of a factor in politics.

The preacher fought the intangible force because he believed it to be the highest duty of the hour; the general fought the machine because he saw no chance of becoming even one of its small bevel gears. They were attracted by community of interest in at least the first thing to be accomplished—the downfall of the organization—and they discovered that each admired Shacklett. In the conversation they had in the beginning each failed to state to the other what qualities in the ex-senator he especially liked; and if they had exchanged ideas on this point it is probable that events would have been shaped differently and the conversation would have broken up in a discussion without either being convinced. But they talked about the things they did agree upon without discovering the things they disagreed upon, and the conversation ended in a compromise between the minister, who preached politics, and the soldier, who had been vanquished by politics, to make an alliance offensive and defensive for a common object.

There were trips over the State separately and meetings together at places where railroad lines crossed; there was much correspondence with others of the opposition. Finally there was a meeting of half a hundred members of the opposition—each with a different ulterior object and each a leader in embryo—at which General French presided and recognized Rev. Thomas Barnes to make the keynote speech. The result of this conference of the clans of the opposition was that General French and Rev. Thomas Barnes traveled from the place of meeting directly to Warsaw, walked out to the Heights and had a little conference of their own with the railroad general counsel, who was so completely out of politics that he felt that he would refuse an election as chairman of a mass meeting of his neighbors.

[To Be Continued.]

September. Summer is passing. Let the first sure mark, the golden lines September comes to us. Across the shortening day with shining grace— Shows gleaming sunset now. The clouds o' the park. Yellow fringes. Dangling shadows chase Along the lawn, or tremble and enliven On groundwork glistering with a golden spark. Pale yellow butterflies float in the air. In many dances up and down they fly. For summer's parting gifts to autumn they Bear lightly, touching here and resting there— September's robes are flushed with golden dye, And magic mists enwrap each shining day. —Louise Brooks.

Zebodee's Children. New York Evening Sun. "Who was the father of Zebodee's children?" asked the Sunday school teacher. "Only it was a question much more recent, and put in all seriousness by a fastidious lady to one of a row of small boys. 'I don't know,' offered the boy. But the lady declined.

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...Topics in the Churches...

SUNDAY-SCHOOL LESSON AND CHRISTIAN ENDEAVOR WORK.

THE SUNDAY-SCHOOL LESSON

Sept. 14, 1902. Deut. xxx, 11-20—Love and Obedience God.

It may be frankly admitted that there is some monotony in the Pentateuch. It is occasioned by the reiteration of considerable portions. Then, Pentateuch as not wanting detail in directions for personal, priestly and tribal conduct. There are the genealogies, the itineraries and the divers laws, sanitary, ecclesiastical and other. The Pentateuch may be a desert of statutory legislation and inventories of places, things and people. It must be acknowledged, however, that this desert is not lacking in oases. And it is well worth while to cross the barren wastes to come upon these gardens of God. They are unexplored, if even matched, in literature and without reference to inspiration, are worthy of attention. They are great thoughts set in language in every way worthy of them. At the same time it is only fair to say that even what have been thought the monotonous parts of the Pentateuch are not wanting in suggestions for example, their very monotonous reiterations of prohibitions, penalties and atonements are significant of the inveterateness of human sin.

Among the oases of the fivefold book, what Moses calls "this commandment" will be recognized as one of the chiefest. One is almost startled to come upon it so early in the evolution of divine truth. We realize that Jesus was not literally issuing a new commandment when He said: "Love God. Love thy neighbor," but was repeating, with the accent of His own divinity, this age-old injunction. We are consciously at the root of the whole matter. Back of all law and legislation is the submission of the heart to a loving obedience. It is this that makes love to God the essence of all true obedience of the law, raises man at once to the level of sons of God. To such the law can never be grievous, for to love all things as God is.

Again, in the enunciation of this commandment something extraneous and distant is not appealed to. It is not "hidden or far off," not "in heaven" or "over the sea." It is distanced by the height of an unattainable ideal. It is in its way reach. It is in man's own conscience and consciousness, the fundamental principle of human nature.

So, after all, under this elaborate mechanism of ritual and ordinance a warm heart is found pulsing with spiritual life and power. Love tunes the heart to God and keeps it in tune. The Berlin Bible says, aptly: "Love is in a true sense God's omnipresence," and with the same meaning Tolstoy affirms: "Where love is there God is."

THE TEACHER'S LANTERN. This paragraph alone is enough to justify the Old Testament forever from the charge of inutility and inefficiency. Nothing could be so applicable to the height of an unattainable ideal. It is a solvent for the labor problem and all ills, individual and collective. Love solves, heals, establishes. All law depends, in the ultimate analysis, upon love.

One glory of the religion of the Bible is the ease with which it is epitomized. Other religions tend to the multiple and multifarious and resist condensation. The true religion finds ample expression in a word of four letters—Love. The sense in which Jesus gave a new commandment, when He said: "Thou shalt love," is this: The average Hebrew was so utterly forgotten that its reaffirmation was to all intents and purposes the announcement of an original commandment. It was new to him.

Utterly gone to seed in ritualism had Israel. The letter had killed the spirit. This was Jesus' contention with His countrymen. They were so busy tithing mint, anise and cummin that they forgot the law of love. They often thought of the essentials of religion: Judgment, mercy and faith. The "farewells of Moses" deserve place among the masterpieces of patriotic and religious eloquence. They are, undoubtedly, his strongest molding influence upon national life and character for twenty centuries. The analogy to them of Paul's farewell to the Ephesian elders has been pointed out.

A pathetic interest attaches to the journey of the wise in quest of truth. They often thought of the essentials of religion: Judgment, mercy and faith. The "farewells of Moses" deserve place among the masterpieces of patriotic and religious eloquence. They are, undoubtedly, his strongest molding influence upon national life and character for twenty centuries. The analogy to them of Paul's farewell to the Ephesian elders has been pointed out.

"Nowhere does the fundamental religious thought of prophecy find clearer expression than in Deuteronomy—the thought that Jehovah asks nothing for himself, but asks it as a religious duty that man should render to man what is right; that God will lie not in any unknown height, but in the moral sphere which is known and understood by all."

CHRISTIAN ENDEAVOR.

Topic for Sept. 14, Delight in God's House—Psalm lxxviii, 1-4; c, 1-5.

Electricity is everywhere. Sink a wire in the earth at any place and you will strike a current of it. It beats in all strata of the air. You carry it with you in your body. Only in certain places, however, is it visible or measurable or capable of work. The dynamo gathers it up, and straightway there is a flash of light, a glow of heat or a thrust of power.

God also is everywhere, and electricity is only one of His far-reaching thoughts. Moreover, God is equally at all places, no stronger or weaker or more loving at one place than another, able to work, to comfort and to enlighten no less in the prison cell, the sickroom and the hospital, than in the solemn cathedral or the cheery chancel.

But, nevertheless, it is in God's house that God makes it especially easy for man to find Him, and it is there that the vast majority of men draw nearest to Him. Moreover, it is true that those who see and hear God in this His appointed meeting place are of all men most likely to see Him and hear Him everywhere else. The testimony of millions of Christians, the experience of the human race, should be decisive on this point.

But no one can see or hear God in the church that does not expect to meet Him there. A gentleman, riding on horseback over a Kentucky road, met an old colored man painfully shaking his way through the deep snow to the church, four miles distant.

"Why, uncle?" exclaimed the gentleman, "why don't you stay home? You shouldn't travel so far on a day like this."

"You see, massa," was the reply, "I disano when de blessing's gwine to come, an' I p'ose it 'ud come this very mornin', an' I away!"

Certainly no one ever went to church expecting a blessing and failed to receive it; nor does it often happen that any one obtains from church service that he did not expect.

Faith, hope, love are transmitted from one to another by a subtle and delightful contagion. Delight in God and in His house passes easily from soul to soul. There is a story of a minister who called upon a certain church member that had been neglecting church attendance. In perfect silence the minister walked up to the fireplace, took the tongs, drew a live coal from the fire and watched it turn to a dull, black cinder. "You see," he said, "the deep snow to the church, four miles distant."

"You needn't say a single word, sir," said the church member, "I'll be there next Sunday."

If your religion has been growing cold it is probably because you have been living away from the fire. Give yourself to church work, and the church will give you back a many-fold return. Your doubts will be overcome by the faith of others, your sorrows dispelled by their good cheer and sympathy, your failures helped by their willing hands in success. For—never forget this—it is not men alone who meet when two or three, or two or three hundred, gather in the church, but Christ "in the midst" of them.

AMOR R. WELLS.

Forgotten Delights. Boston Transcript. Long residence in the city almost obliterates childhood memories of the delights of a real country fruit garden, where one could "pick and eat" with all the relish that freshly gathered fruit has when plucked amid the appetizing environments of nature—the rustling leaves, the soft twittering of the birds and all the stimulating charm of the open. One realizes in such a place how city life deprives the senses; how petty and warping are its hurry and turmoil and personalities when granted the boon of a revel among the "sweets and virtues of the ground." Emerson says: "Nature is loved by what is best in us, and there can be no question as to which is the better, the city or the country life. It is our vanities that hold us to the former. Turn the soul out to pasture in the latter and how it refutes its city habit! Here is a native state that satisfies in a rational, wholesome way the best needs of a rational being. And this satisfaction can be found even within the confines of a little acre-long garden, a defined place where one can most conveniently watch the daily marvel of nature's craft. The unfolding of the buds, the blossoming of the flowers and the development of the harvest of luscious fruit.